



WOMEN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Women are the inherent part of our society and cannot be neglected due to their less power and authority. They are created as a companion for men and men have to make her walk with them in the course of life. She plays roles as a mother, a sister, a daughter, a wife. They play their roles with great responsibilities in upbringing of a healthy solid society, but she is in our so called modern world, still living in chains. The basic unit of society is a woman. As woman makes a family, family makes a home and homes make a society. So we should never think that a society would come into existence without the contribution of women. We all know that without education, no development is possible. A good healthy society doesn't automatically emerge on its own and stands firm but it needs to be emerged and for its emergence women play a pivotal role. From behavioral to health education women have their hands in. It's a woman who teaches how to behave, how to speak and how to deal with different classes of people. These all are the basic fundamentals of a good society and women are the main contributors in building up a strong society. Education is an important requirement for human life. It is as much necessary as food, cloth and shelters. Women who cover half of the present total population must not be left uneducated and in darkness. Their duties do not end in cooking and feeding. A woman of a house has a much wider range of work to do than a man have. She has a greater need of education than a man does. It is thought that both man and woman must be equally educated and they are like the two wings of a bird. Female education is important and all the impediments must be removed from the way of their education. Hence, the present study focuses on Education, Employment and Health of Women in India and study based on secondary sources of data.

KEYWORDS: Inherent Part of Society, Healthy Solid Society, Health Education, Equal Education.

INTRODUCTION:

According India's constitution, women are legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men (Indian Parliament). Because of lack of acceptance from the male dominant society, Indian women suffer immensely. Women are responsible for bearing children, yet they are malnourished and in poor health. Women are also overworked in the field and complete all of the domestic work. Most Indian women are uneducated. Although the country's constitution says women have equal status to men, women are powerless and are mistreated inside and outside the home. India is a society where the male is greatly revered. Therefore women, especially the young girls, get very little respect and standing in this country. The women of the household are required to prepare the meal for the men, who eat most of the food. Only after the males are finished eating, can the females eat. Typically the leftover food is meager, considering the families are poor and have little to begin with. This creates a major problem with malnutrition, especially for pregnant or nursing women. Very few women seek medical care while pregnant because it is thought of as a temporary condition. This is one main reason why India's maternal and infant mortality rates are so high.

WOMEN IN MODERN INDIA:

During this time there was a little development in the women status. There were many women reformers in India who worked for the uplift & betterment of their female counterparts. The begun of Bhopal discarded the 'purdah' & fought in the revolt of 1857. Their education was elevated and English was introduced during this period. Various female writers emerged in the society. In previous times, the status of women in India was inferior to men in the practical life. However, they had a higher status in scriptures. They are considered as the perfect home maker in the world. With their incomparable quality of calmness of their mind, they can easily handle even toughest situation.

Even though the constitution guarantees free primary schooling to everyone up to 14 years of age (Indian Parliament), very few females attend school. Only about 39 percent of all women in India actually attend primary schools. There are several reasons why families choose not to educate their daughters. One reason is that parents get nothing in return for educating their daughters. Another reason is that all the females in a household have the responsibility of the housework. So even though education does not financially burden the family, it costs them the time she spends at school when she could be doing chores. In addition, even if a woman is educated, especially in the poorer regions, there is no hope for a job. Most jobs women perform are agricultural or domestic which do not require a formal education. Another reason girls are not educated is because families are required to supply a chaste daughter to the family of her future husband. With over two-thirds of teachers in India being men and students predominately male, putting daughters in school, where males surround them all day could pose a possible threat to their virginity.

Because women are not educated and cannot hold a prestigious job, they take on the most physically difficult and undesirable jobs. A typical day for a woman in

an agricultural position lasts from 4am to 8pm with only an hour break in the middle. Compared to a man's day, which is from 5am to 10am and then from 3pm to 5pm. Most women are overworked with no maternity leave or special breaks for those who are pregnant. Plus women do the majority of the manual labor that uses a lot of energy compared to the men who do mostly machine operating. Even though women work twice as many hours as men, the men say that "women eat food and do nothing." This is mainly because the work the women perform does not require a lot of skill and are smaller tasks.

WOMENS' LITERACY IN INDIA:

The 15th official census in India was calculated in the year 2011. In a country like India, literacy is the main foundation for social and economic growth. When the British rule ended in India in the year 1947 the literacy rate was just 12%. Over the years, India has changed socially, economically, and globally. After the 2011 census, literacy rate India 2011 was found to be 74.04%. Compared to the adult literacy rate here the youth literacy rate is about 9% higher. Though this seems like a very great accomplishment, it is still a matter of concern that still so many people in India cannot even read and write. The numbers of children who do not get education especially in the rural areas are still high. Though the government has made a law that every child under the age of 14 should get free education, the problem of illiteracy is still at large.

Now, if we consider female literacy rate in India, then it is lower than the male literacy rate as many parents do not allow their female children to go to schools. They get married off at a young age instead. Though child marriage has been lowered to very low levels, it still happens. Many families, especially in rural areas believe that having a male child is better than having a baby girl. So the male child gets all the benefits. Today, the female literacy levels according to the Literacy Rate 2011 census are 65.46% where the male literacy rate is over 80%. The literacy rate in India has always been a matter of concern but many NGO initiatives and government ads, campaigns and programs are being held to spread awareness amongst people about the importance of literacy. Also the government has made strict rules for female equality rights. India literacy rate has shown significant rise in the past 10 years. Here are some facts about different states literacy rate, Kerala is the only state in India to have 100% literacy rate. It is followed by Goa, Tripura, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra, Sikkim. The lowest literacy rate in India is seen in the state of Bihar. We also need to think why is the literacy rate is low here in India compared to other developed countries. Basically the population in India is very high. Being the 7th largest country its population stands 2nd in the world after China. There are over 1 billion people in India. The number of schools and educational centers especially in rural areas is less. Even today many people are below the poverty line. Also people aren't aware that children should get free education according to the law.

Table 1: Literacy Level in India – 2011 Census

State	Literacy	Male	Female	% Change
Kerala	94.00	96.11	92.07	3.14
Lakshadweep	91.85	95.56	87.95	5.19
Mizoram	91.33	93.35	89.27	2.53
Goa	88.70	92.65	84.66	6.69
Tripura	87.22	91.53	82.73	14.03
Daman and Diu	87.10	91.54	79.55	8.92
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	86.63	90.27	82.43	5.33
Delhi	86.21	90.94	80.76	4.54
Chandigarh	86.05	89.99	81.19	4.11
Pondicherry	85.85	91.26	80.67	4.61
Himachal Pradesh	82.80	89.53	75.93	6.32
Maharashtra	82.34	88.38	75.87	5.46
Sikkim	81.42	86.55	75.61	12.61
Tamil Nadu	80.09	86.77	73.44	6.64
Nagaland	79.55	82.75	76.11	12.96
Uttarakhand	78.82	87.40	70.01	7.2
Gujarat	78.03	85.75	69.68	8.89
Manipur	76.94	83.58	70.26	10.33
West Bengal	76.26	81.69	70.54	7.62
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	76.24	85.17	64.32	18.61
Punjab	75.84	80.44	70.73	6.19
Haryana	75.55	84.06	65.94	7.64
Karnataka	75.36	82.47	68.08	8.72
Meghalaya	74.43	75.95	72.89	11.87
Orissa	72.87	81.59	64.01	9.79
Assam	72.19	77.85	66.27	8.94
Chhattisgarh	70.28	80.27	60.24	5.62
Madhya Pradesh	69.32	78.73	59.24	5.58
Uttar Pradesh	67.68	77.28	57.18	11.41
Jammu and Kashmir	67.16	76.75	56.43	11.64
Andhra Pradesh	67.02	74.88	59.15	6.55
Jharkhand	66.41	76.84	55.42	12.85
Rajasthan	66.11	79.19	52.12	5.7
Arunachal Pradesh	65.38	72.55	57.70	11.04
Bihar	61.80	71.20	51.50	14.8
India	74.04	82.14	65.46	8.66

Source: Census of India - 2011 Provisional Figures

WOMEN'S HEALTH IN INDIA:

India is one of the few countries in the world where women and men have nearly the same life expectancy at birth. The fact that the typical female advantage in life expectancy is not seen in India suggests there are systematic problems with women's health. Indian women have high mortality rates, particularly during childhood and in their reproductive years. The health of Indian women is intrinsically linked to their status in society. Research on women's status has found that the contributions Indian women make to families often are overlooked, and instead they are viewed as economic burdens. There is a strong son preference in India, as sons are expected to care for parents as they age. This son preference, along with high dowry costs for daughters, sometimes results in the mistreatment of daughters. Further, Indian women have low levels of both education and formal labor force participation. They typically have little autonomy, living under the control of first their fathers, then their husbands, and finally their sons. All of these factors exert a negative impact on the health status of Indian women. Poor health has repercussions not only for women but also their families. Women in poor health are more likely to give birth to low weight infants. They also are less likely to be able to provide food and adequate care for their children. Finally, a woman's health affects the household economic well-being, as a woman in poor health will be less productive in the labor force. The health and safety concern of women are paramount for the wellbeing of a country, and is an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned. In its report, UNICEF came up with shocking figures on the status of new mothers in India. The maternal mortality report of India stands at 301 per 1000, with as many as 78,000 women in India dying of childbirth complications in that year. Today, due to the burgeoning population of the country, that number is sure to have multiplied considerably. The main causes of maternal mortality are:

- Haemorrhage: 30%

- Anaemia: 19%
- Sepsis: 16%
- Obstructed Labour: 10%
- Abortion: 8%
- Toxaemia: 8%

While there are several programmes that have been set into motion by the Government and several NGOs in the country, there is still a wide gap that exists between those under protection and those not. Poverty and illiteracy add to these complications with local quacks giving ineffective and downright harmful remedies to problems that women have. The empowerment of women begins with a guarantee of their health and safety.

Literacy campaigns in most districts have taken up health and hygiene issues as an integral component of adult education programs. Literacy campaigns have helped to spread knowledge about health care and nutrition, thereby enabling mothers to keep their family in better health and to care better for their children. Literacy campaigns have also disseminated information for creating awareness about problems of early marriage, spacing and small family norms.

Table 2: Total Workers in India – 2011 Census

Population/Workers		Persons	Male	Female
Population	Total	1,21,05,69,573	62,31,21,843	58,74,47,730
Workers		48,17,43,311	33,18,65,930	14,98,77,381
Percentage of workers		39.79	53.26	25.51
Population	Rural	83,34,63,448	42,76,32,643	40,58,30,805
Workers		34,85,97,535	22,67,63,068	12,18,34,467
Percentage of workers		41.83	53.03	30.02
Population	Urban	37,71,06,125	19,54,89,200	18,16,16,925
Workers		13,31,45,776	10,51,02,862	2,80,42,914
Percentage of workers		35.31	53.76	15.44

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India (workers include both main workers and marginal workers)

Table 3: Percentage of Female Main Workers to Total Female Population Under Broad Categories – 1981 – 2011

Census Year	Percentage to Total Female Population				
	Female Main Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Household Industry	Other workers
1981	13.99	4.65	6.46	0.64	2.24
1991	15.93	5.51	7.05	0.55	2.82
2001	14.68	5.11	4.51	0.95	4.11
2011	25.50	24	41.1	5.7	29.2

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India

Table 4: Work Participation Rate by Sex in India (1971-2011)

Year	Total/Rural/Urban	Persons	Males	Females
1971	Total	33.08	52.61	12.11
	Rural	34.03	53.62	13.42
	Urban	29.34	48.82	6.68
1981	Total	36.70	52.62	19.67
	Rural	38.79	53.77	23.06
	Urban	29.99	49.06	8.31
1991	Total	37.50	51.61	22.27
	Rural	40.09	52.58	26.79
	Urban	30.16	48.92	9.19
2001	Total	39.10	51.68	25.63
	Rural	41.75	52.11	30.79
	Urban	32.25	50.60	11.88
2011	Total	39.8	53.3	25.5
	Rural	41.8	53.0	30.0
	Urban	35.3	53.8	15.4

Source: Office of the Registrar General, India

Table 5: Average Daily Employment of Women in Factories

Year	Total Employment in Thousands	Women Participants in Thousands	Percentage Share of Women to Total Employment
1961	3497.0	372.3	10.6
1971	4298.0	370.1	8.6
1981	5342.5	497.8	9.3
1991	5214.2	507.0	9.7
2001	3272.1	480.1	14.7
2002	3330.4	247.4	16.4
2003	2139.5	236.0	11.0
2004	3554.0	641.7	18.06
2005	3848.0	640.4	16.64
2006	4373.0	730.7	16.71
2007	3054.0	313.9	10.28
2008	2628.4	220.9	8.41
2009	2662.4	194.1	7.29
2010	4713.7	737.6	15.65

Source: Annual Returns Received Under the Factories Act, 1948 by Labour Bureau (Data for the years 2009 and 2010 are based on the returns received from 17 and 21 states/U.Ts. respectively).

SUGGESTIONS TO EMPOWER WOMEN:

- Since socio-economic weak condition of family is reported, we should initiate educational programmes for girl children from those households by involving them in these programmes it can be able to reduce children in labor and early marriage.
- We should increase the number of government girl's schools for the easy accessibility of basic education to girls.
- NGOs are not giving financial encouragement to girls. To minimize the drop-outs among girls, the government scholarships and other educational schemes must be launched and implemented effectively through.
- Mere school education to women cannot guarantee empowerment. The economic empowerment of women is crucial. Therefore, women must be facilitated to gain higher education, especially technical education, to obtain economic benefits from modern occupations.
- Sensitization of mass media along with families is necessary to create awareness about the importance of women education and empowerment among parents.
- It is found that most of the women are assisting in household business of handicraft. Skill improvement programs, information of new techniques of production and marketing should be provided to women of Hamadan province.
- By bringing change in the attitude of men-folk; women's economic participation can be increased. In order to change the mindset of men, the awareness programmes like adult education, mass media education and higher remunerative jobs to women should be given importance.
- There is a lot to learn from Indian experiences of women development and NGO work. To build-up organizational capacity among women, we should encourage formation of groups/professional organizations like SHGs, credit societies, employee's associations, etc.
- Most of the women are wishing to keep continuing their education further. Those who said no have given various valid hurdles to it. These hurdles can be removed by initiatives taken of government and NGOs. Role of NGOs in encouraging, sensitizing and providing help to them becomes important to women's education.

CONCLUSION:

To truly understand what women empowerment is, there needs to be a sea-change in the mind-set of the people in the country. Not just the women themselves, but the men have to wake up to a world that is moving towards equality and equity. The stress should be on equal work and elimination of discrimination in employment. The popular UNESCO slogan comes in handy: "Educate a man you educate an individual; educate a woman you educate family." It is better that this is embraced earlier rather than later, for our own good. Swami Vivekananda once said "arise away and stop not until the goal is reached". Thus our country should thus be catapulted into the horizon of empowerment of women and revel in its glory. We have a long way to go, but we will get there someday. We shall overcome. Women will have to empower themselves 'from below' in order to

compel the government to empower them 'from above'. Further there is a need for change of values and behaviour in the society, a need for positive socio-cultural and economic empowerment and above all the will power and strong determination of women to join politics. Education can play a vital role in bringing about the behavioural changes among the women and make them well equipped in terms of knowledge, competence and capacity to deal with different political problems. It may be concluded that women have shifted traditional assumptions about their roles and capabilities, there has been a marked change, and it has been for better. Many of its benefits however yet to touch the majority and all of us continue to experience various forms of gender discrimination. If laws designed to address the concerns of women are to have a dramatic and positive impact on women's lives, they must be sensitive the social, economic and political disempowerment of women throughout the world. The most important measure of their success should be the extent to which they success to interpret, apply and enforce laws of their own making, incorporating their own voices, values and concerns.

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